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FOR ACTION

RECOMMENDATION FOR SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR PROGRAMMES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE WITHOUT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING FROM GENERAL RESOURCES*

SUMMARY

The present document contains a recommendation for supplementary funding in countries in Central and Eastern Europe for which no recommendation for funding from general resources is requested at the 1993 Executive Board session. The programme proposal submitted here is aimed at expanding or complementing ongoing programmes in the country concerned. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve supplementary funding in the following amount for the programme listed below, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions.

Country/programme	Amount (United States dollars)	Duration
Romania	3 345 000	1993-1994

A summary of the individual recommendation follows. A table setting out the planned annual phasing of expenditure for the supplementary funding proposal is given at the end of the document.

* In order to meet documentation deadlines, the present document was prepared before aggregate financial data were finalized. Final adjustments, taking into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1992, will be contained in the "Summary of 1993 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1993/P/L.2 and Add.1).

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ROMANIA

Basic data (1991 unless otherwise stated) a/

Child population (millions, 0-15 years)	5.6
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	34
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	27
Underweight (%, moderate and severe)	..
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) (1989)	150
Literacy (%, male/female) (1970)	96/91
Primary school enrolment (%, net, male/female)	../..
Percentage of grade 1 reaching grade 4	94
Access to safe water (%)	..
Access to health services (%)	..
GNP per capita	$1,340 b/

One-year-olds fully immunized against:

tuberculosis:	90 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus:	96 per cent
measles:	89 per cent
poliomyelitis:	92 per cent

Pregnant women immunized against:

tetanus:	.. per cent

a/ Data from The State of the World's Children 1993 unless otherwise stated.

b/ World Bank data.

The situation of children and women

1. As Romania adjusts to its new political and socio-economic status, planning with the Government of Romania and other partners for future UNICEF-supported activities in the country has taken place against a background of rapid change. Three years after the overthrow of the previous regime, the consequences of the transition towards a market economy are apparent everywhere: steeply rising prices; unemployment currently affecting 10 per cent of the workforce and temporary employment even more widespread; and significant declines in real wages. The gross national product and industrial output have fallen, while the domestic budget deficit and foreign indebtedness have increased. Shortages of fuel, fertilizer and pesticides and confusion over ownership changes have brought about decreases in agricultural production. Economic disruption is accompanied by equally profound, if less visible, changes in political and social expectations and the disintegration of long-established patterns of authority and control.

2. The economic hardships engendered by the transition are especially burdensome for families and women. Traditionally, female labour-force participation has been high in Romania, with many families depending on the incomes of both parents. Now, however, over 60 per cent of those currently unemployed are women. Fewer than 60 per cent of all those unemployed qualify for the modest benefits provided by the State. Recent studies show a steady increase in the number of families living either in actual poverty or just above the poverty line, with one third of families with four children living in poverty. Food prices, especially those for meat and dairy products, have risen even faster than those of other commodities, and are more than 10 times their level one year ago, while wage increases lag behind.

3. Economic circumstances have prevented investment in the human and physical resources needed to rehabilitate health and social services, which were severely neglected during the 1980s. Large increases in budget allocations for health and education have failed to keep pace with inflation, and service delivery is beginning to be affected. Nevertheless, the broad indicators of infant, child and maternal mortality have improved since the 1980s. Infant mortality, while declining in regard to earlier years, shows wide variations among districts of the country, probably linked to ethnic and cultural variations. Acute respiratory infections (ARI) and diarrhoeal diseases contribute significantly to infant deaths. The principal causes of child deaths are respiratory infections (33 per cent of the total) and accidents (27 per cent). Medically transmitted human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), until recently largely confined to children in institutions, are beginning to make their appearance in the general child population.

4. In the late 1980s, maternal mortality was estimated to be around 150 per 100,000 live births. The level has decreased significantly since the legalization of abortion, but remains high relative to comparable countries in the region. The principal causes of this problem, currently being studied in detail, are known to be inadequate use of prenatal care services and of recently introduced family planning services. While 90 per cent of women are aware of modern family planning methods, only 16 per cent currently use them. Abortion remains the principal method of family planning, with 2.78 abortions for every live birth in 1991. The natural rate of population increase has dropped sharply, from 2.9 per cent in 1990 to 1 per cent in 1991. No immediate explanation is available for this change.

5. Romania has achieved immunization coverage levels in the region of 89 per cent against the main childhood diseases. However, the uneven quality of services delivered and low public awareness of the importance of immunization, combined with anxieties about the risk of transmission of HIV and hepatitis B, are threatening the maintenance of these high levels. Children's growth status is generally satisfactory, although there are significant geographical and socio-economic variations. The level and duration of breast-feeding are relatively high, but inappropriate feeding practices compromise its benefits and contribute to an extremely high level of iron deficiency anaemia. Iodine deficiency is also a problem in some parts of the country.

6. As far as education is concerned, traditionally high levels of primary school enrolment and achievement are being maintained despite severe resource constraints. Nevertheless, 1992 saw a significant decrease, as yet unexplained,

in the numbers of candidates for entry into secondary education. Government subsidies to kindergarten education have been withdrawn, leading parents to reduce or in some cases put a stop to their children's participation. The enrolment of gypsy children at all levels of the school system is considerably below that of other children.

7. The conditions of children in institutions, which have been the main focus of international support to Romania's children since their dramatic plight was discovered in 1990, have improved significantly as a result of the combined efforts of the Romanian authorities and foreign agencies. None the less, sustained efforts are needed to improve the skills and knowledge of the staff who care for these children. In addition, much more support is needed to protect children at risk of institutionalization, whether because of disability or family crisis, and to provide alternative solutions for them. The needs of other high-risk groups of children, such as ethnic minorities or young people in conflict with the law, require special and urgent attention.

Past cooperation

8. The decision to establish an emergency programme in Romania was taken after the visit of a UNICEF team in August 1990, which investigated the conditions of Romanian children, particularly those living in institutions. Funds contributed by two Governments and seven National Committees for UNICEF (totalling $4,180,000) have been used for programme activities and for the support of the UNICEF Romania office, staffed by one international staff member and a team of two Romanian professionals and four support personnel.

9. The August 1990 mission identified the severe deterioration of health and social services in Romania during the 1980s as a major contributor to the high levels of institutionalization of children and a continuing threat to the well-being of all of the country's children. Thus, UNICEF assistance in 1991 and 1992 was directed towards both the needs of children in institutions and the needs of the community as a whole. In addition to providing supplies and technical assistance in response to emergency needs, UNICEF has supported policy-making and planning for children in the special circumstances of the economic transition.

10. Programme activities in 1991 and 1992 included a number of actions, several undertaken in conjunction with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in favour of some 90,000 institutionalized children (the provision of drugs and equipment, and contributions to training and research efforts). In addition, UNICEF has supported continuing government efforts to monitor and direct the many different programmes carried out by foreign agencies in children's institutions through the establishment of the interministerial Romanian Information Clearing-house. The Clearing-house serves as a focal point for the exchange of information about activities, policies and priorities for children among all concerned, organizing meetings, maintaining databases and publishing newsletters. In November 1992, a five-day forum organized by the Clearing-house brought together over 1,100 people, including government representatives from eight ministries and from all 41 districts of the country, along with representatives from almost 200 foreign and Romanian NGOs. The forum focused on the need to reorient assistance to Romania's children away from

emergency interventions and towards the establishment of more permanent and appropriate systems of care.

11. The training of nurses and social workers, key actors in promoting family health and well-being and in preventing the inappropriate institutionalization of children, was suspended for a long period under the previous regime, damaging the reputation and the effectiveness of both professions. UNICEF, working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, has provided assistance for nursing and social work curriculum development and reform, and has supplied teaching materials and equipment for 10,000 nursing students and 500 social work students. Assistance has also been provided for the in-service training of 2,500 nurses in family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and community nursing. Social workers and government officials have taken part in courses on basic social work principles. Health education and promotion were virtually non-existent under the previous regime. UNICEF-supported technical assistance to health promotion planning in all 41 districts of the country has helped to prepare the basis for major World Bank funding of this priority sector, which will have an impact nationally. A pilot project, carried out in partnership with two ministries, their research institutes and an international NGO, has focused on informing child-care providers, teachers and parents about the developmental needs of the young child. Seminars and workshops have promoted new approaches to special groups, such as handicapped and disabled children, children needing protection because of their lack of a family and street children. Partners working together with UNICEF on behalf of these groups include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Community, and Romanian and international NGOs.

12. During 1992, efforts to identify and quantify the extent of children's problems have been supported. An analysis of the situation of children and women, now nearing completion, will be the starting-point for the preparation in 1993 of a national programme of action (NPA) for children. With UNICEF assistance, WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), studies have been conducted on the nutritional status of children in the community, the reproductive health of their mothers and the use of prenatal care services. The results of a study on the special problems of gypsy children and their families and of an interministerial survey of social welfare and protection services for children will be available shortly.

Lessons learned

13. A full assessment of the 1991-1992 programme is scheduled for early 1993. Nevertheless, the experience gained from two years' work in Romania has already helped to define strategies and priority areas for future action. In programme actions so far, UNICEF has demonstrated its commitment to the development and reorientation of Romania's considerable human resources through its support to initial and in-service training. UNICEF has assisted in the design of health education and promotion measures to emphasize the value of community self-reliance for child protection and development. The provision of small amounts of material and technical assistance has served as the starting-point for policy discussions on child welfare and protection. Studies and surveys have been undertaken not only to identify the problems of children, but also to strengthen national research capacity. Concrete responses by UNICEF to needs identified through research have highlighted the need to move rapidly from

analysis to action. Advocacy for children in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has stressed the equal rights of all children, whether they are in institutions or with their families, whether handicapped or healthy, whether in the mainstream or marginalized by ethnic or social factors.

14. In the light of the experience acquired, the main task for UNICEF, and one in which it has already demonstrated that it can be an effective partner, is to support the reorientation of services for children and women away from the static and curative and towards a dynamic and participatory approach. The present quality of services is compromised not only by resource constraints, but also by the low level of informed involvement of both parents and providers. Parents need to have their confidence restored to play the full role as primary providers of care and educators of their children, while professionals need to be ready to make their skills available to support families. All children, but particularly those in difficult circumstances, must have available improved services, based in the community wherever possible. They would also benefit from a climate of informed public understanding of their rights and needs. Lessons learned in the previous period of cooperation about the appropriate mixture of capacity-building, material assistance and advocacy will be applied in pursuance of these broad objectives.

15. Through its experience in Romania, UNICEF has had the opportunity to develop and test appropriate approaches to cooperation in countries where resources are limited and relationships with partners have recently been established. Under the combined stimulus of an emergency mandate, limited human and financial means and the need to establish a reputation as a reliable and energetic partner for children, UNICEF assistance in 1991 and 1992 moved rapidly from ideas to action. The programming of assistance has been continuous, flexible and adaptive, combining timely responses to emerging needs and priorities with the reinforcement of national capacity to identify, analyse and resolve children's problems. Action for children has been accompanied by advocacy on their behalf with both the Government and donors, ensuring continuing priority for children in national planning and policy-making.

16. The creation of partnerships for children was an urgent necessity for UNICEF in the complex and rapidly evolving situation in Romania. Donors and the Government alike have been constrained by mutual unfamiliarity and by the plethora of problems confronting them. From an early stage, UNICEF has been able to play a significant role in promoting partnerships, bringing together the expertise and resources of the Government, the non-governmental sector and donors, emphasizing team-based intersectoral approaches to child problems.

17. The principal role of UNICEF in Romania has frequently been that of a catalyst, mediating and combining the potential of different actors in order to maximize the effects of their actions for children. The progressive strengthening of relationships with the Government has been accompanied by the growth of a network of links with other donors, particularly the agencies of the United Nations system. These links have considerably increased the scope and significance of UNICEF activities, giving them an impact and an image which greatly exceed what might have been anticipated in view of the organization's modest commitment.

18. In Romania, UNICEF has learned about both styles of cooperation and about programme content. UNICEF continues to acquire experience in Romania which can be applied elsewhere. Some of this experience has already been shared with other countries in the region, for example, Romania's experience with regulating international adoption and in developing an intersectoral HIV/AIDS education model. In other areas, such as primary health care (PHC), UNICEF is gaining experience in enhancing the quality of available services, rather than simply extending access to them. Above all, UNICEF is learning that a small amount of resources, deployed in a flexible and collaborative way and facilitating the efforts of others, can open the way for UNICEF to become a trusted partner in the process of enhancing the well-being of children and families.

Programme development and recommended cooperation

19. In early 1992, the Government of Romania, the principal partner of UNICEF in its actions for children, requested the extension of the programme beyond the end of 1992. At its 1992 regular session, the UNICEF Executive Board agreed that UNICEF should continue its activities in Romania for a further two-year period, using supplementary funding provided from special contributions from donors (E/ICEF/1993/14, decision 1992/19). Building on its experience and on the reputation it has acquired with its partners as a credible, effective advocate for children, UNICEF now has the opportunity to help reinforce the services and structures which will guarantee the development and protection of Romania's children in the uncertain circumstances of the transition.

20. Overall, the prospects for UNICEF cooperation in Romania promise more opportunities than constraints. The major significant limitations to the scale and scope of UNICEF activities in Romania are those arising from the organization's extremely modest resources, both human and financial, and, since no general resources are available for the programme, uncertainties about the availability of donor funding in the currently difficult climate.

21. The programme preparation process, undertaken in the second half of 1992, has relied principally on the limited resources available within the UNICEF office at Bucharest. Each of the UNICEF partners, in particular, the five ministries involved, has contributed extensively to the process of identifying priority areas for support. The results of the various studies and surveys assisted by UNICEF in 1991 and 1992 have provided important information about the problems of women and children and how to address them, and has contributed to policy development in various areas. Programme proposals for the 1993-1994 period of cooperation were comprehensively reviewed by representatives of the Government and donors at a December 1992 meeting before their finalization.

22. Romania's commitment to the development of a fully democratic and equitable civil society is the overall framework for UNICEF activities in the country. The UNICEF mandate for cooperation is drawn from Romania's early ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its endorsement of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. UNICEF now has an opportunity to assist Romania in achieving the goals of both. These goals will be further specified when Romania prepares an NPA for children in 1993.

23. Proposed future cooperation, drawing on experience acquired in 1991 and 1992 as the focus of programme activities changed from emergency interventions

to longer-term support of rehabilitation and development, will emphasize activities which promote the well-being of the child as a whole, his or her early development, health, education and social well-being. In accordance with the lessons learned during 1991 and 1992, the principal emphasis will be on intersectoral efforts to educate and inform families in order to equip them as guarantors of their children's welfare and to promote appropriate community responses to the needs of children requiring special protection, whether they are disadvantaged by physical or mental handicaps, or at risk because of their family situation or ethnic background. Assistance will continue to concentrate on strengthening the existing national capacity to deliver services to children and to plan, manage and monitor these services. Limited amounts of supplies and equipment will be provided in support of the achievement of specific targets.

24. As in the previous period of cooperation, UNICEF will continue to use its modest human and financial resources as a catalyst for promoting partnerships and generating resources for children. Relationships already established with donors, including WHO, UNESCO, the World Bank, the European Community and the United States Agency for International Development, will be sustained. In critical areas such as basic education and poverty alleviation, where UNICEF is not itself active at present, the organization will advocate with other donors for the allocation of resources. International NGOs are already important partners for UNICEF in Romania, and the growing potential of Romanian NGOs will be increasingly mobilized in UNICEF-assisted activities. The Romanian Information Clearing-house will be further expanded to maximize NGO participation in providing for children. The support of other non-formal channels, particularly the media, critically important in public education and opinion-forming, will be sought.

25. Three main programme areas have been developed within this overall strategic framework. Although they are distinct areas, their underlying approaches and many of their component activities are interdependent and reinforce one another. All three aim to equip parents and professionals for an active role in promoting various aspects of child and family welfare. All programme areas emphasize the importance of strengthening the national capacity to analyse child problems and to plan and provide quality services for children. All depend for their successful realization on the flexible and collaborative approaches developed by UNICEF in Romania, where UNICEF resources and reputation reinforce the efforts of others.

Family education

26. Activities in the first programme area aim at enabling families and care-givers to improve and maintain the health and welfare of children. Under the previous regime, the role of parents as primary providers for their children was undervalued and diminished. The result was almost exclusive reliance on the skills and knowledge of professionals at a time when health and social services were in decline due to inadequate human and material investment. Children's health and development prospects suffered as a result. Nurses, social workers and pre-school educators are permanent resources for families, and their technical knowledge and communications skills now need to be reinforced through appropriate training. To have full impact, public information and education efforts require the involvement of the media, radio and television as well as the press. An estimated 90 per cent of Romanian households have access to

television: this considerable capacity for public education needs to be directed and oriented towards the concerns of the child and the family.

27. In this programme area, UNICEF will support the production of a range of family and public health education materials based on the Facts for Life approach, including a "healthy family" notebook aimed particularly at the parents of the 275,000 children born in Romania each year. Health promotion and communication training efforts for health staff, teachers, students and the public will be expanded, based on the health promotion centres which exist in each of Romania's 41 districts. Support to the training of 10,000 nursing students and 500 social work students will be continued, including the preparation, in partnership with WHO and NGOs, of teaching and information materials. The early child development project will be expanded from 5 to 10 sites, and preparations will be made for its extension to more than 800 day-care centres and 12,000 kindergartens throughout Romania. Training and orientation for the media on child and family matters will be supplied, including support to five pilot media projects. Special attention will be given to the particular educational and information needs of minority groups.

Maternal and child health

28. The second programme area groups together activities to help reinforce PHC services for children and women in the transition. Structures for PHC delivery are already well-established, but certain critical areas related to UNICEF priorities need support. Child development is compromised at present by inappropriate feeding practices and other factors such as diarrhoeal diseases and ARI, requiring continuous monitoring. Energetic efforts will be required to maintain the current level of breast-feeding as the society modernizes. Supplements can and should compensate for iron and iodine deficiencies in children. To maintain current levels of complete immunization coverage, improvements in programme management and service delivery are necessary, as well as new approaches to the selection, sterilization and disposal of equipment to reduce the danger of contamination. Major risks to maternal and child health arise from both the inadequate provision of prenatal care and family planning services and their under-use by women. Improved services must be accompanied by education of both mothers and providers.

29. Activities in this programme area will aim to help achieve the World Summit for Children goals of reducing infant, child and maternal mortality, improving the nutritional status of children and eliminating micronutrient deficiencies. UNICEF, supported by technical expertise from partner agencies, including WHO and CDC, will provide assistance to the promotion of breast-feeding in 500 maternity hospitals and through 41 nursing schools and six medical schools. The same partners will assist in the establishment of a sentinel nutrition and child health surveillance system, which will include indicators on ARI and diarrhoeal diseases, and the provision of dietary supplements in 100 of Romania's 4,500 dispensaries. Improvements in the management of the immunization programme and its implementation for the benefit of the 275,000 babies born every year will be supported by technical assistance and equipment. The quality of prenatal and other maternal health services provided through 5,000 dispensaries and polyclinics will be improved through assistance to training and the provision of services. Priority will be given to those geographical areas and ethnic or

socio-economic groups where infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality are above the national average.

Children with special needs

30. The third programme area concentrates on strengthening key services for children in especially difficult circumstances in the context of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One such group of children are those who are at risk because of family breakdown, abandonment or abuse. Existing locally based child protection structures need strengthening through training and awareness-creation. Options for the protection of children other than institutionalization must be developed, and community responses to family problems must be encouraged. Children who are handicapped or disabled constitute a second group meriting special attention. Those already in institutions need ever better trained staff to promote their physical and psychological development. Children with handicaps who live at home with their parents require help from the community to ensure their educational, social and cultural integration. Children in conflict with the law constitute a new group of children with special needs in Romania. Economic and social disruption, including falling school attendance, is leading to a rapid rise in juvenile delinquency in a society ill-prepared to deal with the phenomenon. Greater knowledge and understanding of the problem needs to be created, and alternative ways of dealing with young offenders need to be put in place.

31. Activities in favour of children at risk will focus on the provision of training for local child protection authorities and the creation, in conjunction with NGOs already active in the field, of pilot community-based services for children and families, initially in five municipalities. Experience gained will be used to design a training programme which can be replicated nationally. Children in institutions (currently about 90,000) will benefit from UNICEF support to a national training programme currently being prepared for basic child-care staff. UNICEF will also support projects undertaken by other agencies, especially NGOs, benefiting 300 educators for young children in 65 orphanages, as well as physiotherapists and other specialists. Four training resource centres will be established with UNICEF support. Two pilot projects to promote social and educational integration of handicapped children into the community will be undertaken jointly with UNESCO and local NGOs. Improvements of the conditions for children in conflict with the law (at present estimated to number about 6,000) will be promoted through UNICEF assistance to the development of non-custodial alternatives in two pilot areas and training and awareness-creation activities for the 40 judges specially concerned with the problems of young offenders.

32. In monitoring the progress of programme activities in all three areas, UNICEF will work partly through established mechanisms (for example, the reporting of communicable diseases and the recording of infant and child mortality) and partly through systems specially designed for each project. The nutrition surveillance system to be set up with UNICEF assistance will include growth and other child health indicators. Pilot projects for children in difficult circumstances will incorporate the collection of baseline data and the design of monitoring and evaluation criteria and mechanisms. Special surveys will be undertaken as necessary to monitor the effects of education and information activities. Continuing efforts will be made to build national

capacity in research methodology, including community-based and rapid assessment techniques, and to strengthen and enlarge the role and functions of the Romanian Information Clearing-house.

Estimated annual expenditure
(In thousands of United States dollars)

Country/programme	1993	1994	Total
Family education	685	852	1 537
Maternal and child health	406	471	877
Children with special needs	410	521	931
Total	1 501	1 844	3 345